
Desktop BNG Risk Screen

Tier 1 – Desktop intelligence

Land to the north of Corefields, Sidford, Sidmouth, EX10 9SG

Client: **Sample Client**
Reference: 999-DEMO-2026 -PFCO-REP-BNGScreening-R01
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1 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
BGP	Biodiversity Gain Plan
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BU	Biodiversity Units (statutory metric)
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
HMRC	His Majesty's Revenue and Customs
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MBC	Mandatory Biodiversity Credit (DEFRA-issued, last-resort offsetting)
NE	Natural England
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
RB	Responsible Body (DEFRA-designated for off-site BNG)
S106	Section 106 Agreement (Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
SBI	Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA Metric 4.0)
SBSU	Statutory Biodiversity Site Unit
UKHab	UK Habitat Classification

2 How to Read This Report

This section explains how the report is structured, how risk ratings are presented, and what action you should take based on the findings.

2.1 Reading Order

We recommend the following reading order:

1. **Executive Summary.** A one-page overview of the key findings and overall risk rating. Start here if you are short on time.
2. **Main body sections.** Detailed analysis of each topic area, presented in a logical sequence from site context through to recommendations.
3. **Recommendations.** Specific actions required before, during, or after the planning process.
4. **Limitations and Disclaimers.** Important caveats on the scope of the assessment and the conditions under which the findings are valid.

2.2 Report Structure

Every technical section of this report follows a consistent structure:

- **Context.** What the section covers and why it matters to the development proposal.
- **Data and Evidence.** The factual information drawn from public datasets, authoritative public data sources, and client-supplied information.
- **Analysis.** Our professional assessment of what the data means for the site.
- **Risk Rating.** A traffic-light classification (where applicable) summarising the level of concern.
- **Recommendation.** What action, if any, is required.

2.3 Traffic-Light Key

Risk ratings throughout this report use a three-colour system:

LOW	Low risk. No significant constraint identified. Standard design measures are sufficient. No specialist investigation is likely to be required.
MEDIUM	Moderate risk. A constraint or data gap has been identified that requires attention. Further investigation, a design response, or a planning condition may be needed.
HIGH	High risk. A significant constraint or issue has been identified. Specialist investigation, a specific design solution, or early engagement with the relevant statutory body is strongly recommended before submission.

2.4 What to Do Next

1. Review the Executive Summary for an overview of all findings.
2. Focus on any items rated **MEDIUM** or **HIGH**; these require action before or during the planning process.
3. Check the **Recommendations** section for a prioritised list of next steps.
4. Review the **Update Triggers** section to understand when this report should be refreshed.
5. Contact Site Intelligence if you have questions about any finding or wish to commission follow-up specialist work.

Desktop Intelligence: Biodiversity Net Gain

This biodiversity net gain assessment presents desktop intelligence compiled from authoritative public data sources available at the date of review. This assessment is not a full BNG assessment using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, current version). Metric calculations presented are indicative and based on desktop habitat classification. It is based on DEFRA MAGIC habitat data, Natural England priority habitat inventories, Living England habitat mapping, and published BNG guidance. It is subject to the data gaps, assumptions and limitations stated in this report.

Site Intelligence is prepared to have this assessment reviewed and verified by a suitably qualified ecologist. For formal planning submission, this assessment should be verified by a full member of CIEEM (MCIEEM) with demonstrable competence in BNG metric calculations and habitat condition assessment. This represents the desktop strategy stage of a staged delivery process; specialist sign-off should follow before submission.

3 Executive Summary

This Stage 1 desktop BNG Screening Statement considers a proposed residential development for up to 15 dwellings at Land to the north of Corefields, Sidford, Sidmouth, EX10 9SG. The site comprises approximately 1.08 ha of land. Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain applies, and no statutory exemption has been identified on the current desktop evidence.

The indicative desktop baseline and the 10% gain target shown elsewhere in this report are screening-stage estimates only; they must be confirmed by a UKHab Phase 1 habitat survey, habitat condition assessment, and statutory metric calculation by a suitably qualified ecologist, such as a full member of CIEEM (MCIEEM) or equivalent, before any reliance is placed on them in a planning submission.

TIER-1 DESKTOP REPORT — LIMITATION & SCOPE NOTICE: This Tier-1 desktop report is suitable for early client-side decision-making and consultant briefing. It is NOT a formal submission document and must be verified or replaced by the relevant qualified specialist report where required by the LPA or statutory consultees. The overall pack recommendation set out in the cover letter is the controlling instruction; this report is one input within that recommendation. The site comprises improved grass-land of low ecological distinctiveness.

BNG applies?	Yes — no exemption applies
Risk rating	AMBER
Recommended next step	UKHab Phase 1 / PEA and Tier 2 Pre-App Pack
Anti-degradation flag	INCONCLUSIVE
LNRS context	Low (×1.00)

Scope boundary — BNG vs HRA / nutrient neutrality

Where this report flags Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening, Appropriate Assessment, or nutrient neutrality matters, those are identified as **wider** ecological / planning risk items because they may affect programme and determination. They are NOT resolved by this BNG Screening Statement and require separate competent assessment where the LPA or statutory consultees request them. The BNG product covers Schedule 7A net-gain compliance only.

Commercial implication

Mandatory BNG itself is unlikely to be the dominant viability constraint on current desktop evidence — the indicative scenario costs in the BNG Risk Rating and Estimated Costs section are bounded. Where the LPA confirms protected-species constraints, nutrient neutrality, or HRA matters are triggered, those will need to be resolved before determination, not deferred to commencement-stage discharge. Address those items early in the planning programme.

4 Introduction

This Stage 1 desktop BNG Screening Statement has been prepared by Site Intelligence (a service of PF & Co Holdings Ltd) on behalf of ~~Sample Client~~ in support of the proposed development at Land to the north of Corefields, Sidford, Sidmouth, EX10 9SG. The purpose of this report is to identify whether mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain applies, establish an indicative desktop baseline, flag the likely ecological constraints, and identify the next actions required before the scheme can progress towards a submission-ready BNG position.

The assessment is based on public datasets, mapped habitat and designated-site information, and client-supplied site details. It does NOT replace a UKHab survey, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, protected-species survey, Habitats Regulations Assessment screening, statutory metric calculation, or Biodiversity Gain Plan.

The proposal for 15 dwellings on a 1.08-hectare agricultural field presents no fatal Tier-1 constraint but requires Tier-2 assessment and mitigation across multiple statutory pathways. Five European sites fall within the zone of influence and must proceed to Habitats Regulations screening: Sidmouth to West Bay SAC (2,697m south), East Devon Heaths SPA (5,234m), East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SAC (5,234m), Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC (7,903m), and Quarry and Caves SAC (8,466m). Credible pathways include recreation pressure, atmospheric pollution and nitrogen deposition. Nutrient neutrality is a statutory pre-determination gateway; a nutrient budget and, if required, secured mitigation (on-site wetland or off-site phosphate credits) must be demonstrated before permission can be lawfully granted. Boundary hedgerows and trees are the primary ecological assets and provide connectivity, foraging and nesting habitat for bats and birds. Protected species including common pipistrelle, lesser horseshoe bat and brown long-eared bat are recorded within the search radius. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is required to scope species-specific surveys. Mandatory biodiversity net gain of 0.22 units (10% above the baseline 2.16 units) must be delivered and maintained for 30 years. The mitigation hierarchy requires retention and buffering of boundary features, with development directed to the field interior. Recommended conditions include hedgerow protection, sensitive lighting, nesting-season clearance controls, reptile-sensitive methods, and a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Site Address	Land to the north of Corefields, Sidford, Sidmouth, EX10 9SG
Postcode	EX10 9SG
Local Planning Authority	East Devon District Council
Proposal	Residential development for up to 15 dwellings
Proposed Units	15
Client / Applicant	Sample Client
Document Reference	999-DEMO-2026 -PFCO-REP-BNGScreening-R01
Report Date	10 May 2026

5 Legislative Framework

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain is secured through Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). Subject to limited exemptions, relevant planning permissions in England must deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain measured using the statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, current version).

For this site, no statutory exemption has been identified on the desktop evidence. The BNG requirement should therefore be assumed to apply unless the applicant’s planning / ecology team confirms otherwise before submission.

A Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) is required as a deemed pre-commencement condition under Schedule 7A paragraph 13 — it must be approved by the LPA before development starts (LPA has 8 weeks to approve or refuse). At application stage, sufficient information must be provided to demonstrate that the gain objective is achievable (Schedule 7A paragraph 14(2)). This desktop report provides early-stage screening only and does not constitute a formal statutory metric submission or Biodiversity Gain Plan.

Requirement	Detail
Mandatory BNG	All planning permissions granted in England (with limited exceptions) must deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain
Commencement	Mandatory from February 2024 (major development) and April 2024 (minor development)
Duration	Habitat must be secured and maintained for at least 30 years
Metric	the statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, current version) used to calculate baseline and post-development biodiversity value
Mitigation Hierarchy	On-site habitat creation/enhancement preferred; off-site or statutory credits as last resort
Biodiversity Gain Plan	Required as a deemed pre-commencement condition (Schedule 7A para 13) — must demonstrate how 10% BNG will be achieved
Exemptions	Householder applications, self-build (subject to conditions), development impacting habitat below de minimis threshold

NPPF Dec 2024 paragraph 187(d) states that planning decisions should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. The Environment Act 2021 places this on a statutory footing with the minimum 10% requirement.

6 Site Description

Site Address	Land to the north of Corefields, Sidford, Sidmouth, EX10 9SG
Ward	Sidmouth Rural
Site Area	1.08 ha
Existing Use	Agricultural field
Elevation	97m AOD
Rural/Urban	Small town — within built-up area fringe

7 Baseline Habitat Assessment

The application area is a single agricultural field of approximately 1.08 hectares at around 97 m AOD, on the lower rolling valley slopes of the Sid Valley. On desktop and aerial evidence the dominant habitat is agriculturally improved or semi-improved grassland of low ecological distinctiveness. The parcel is bounded by hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The applicant has confirmed boundary trees and hedgerows are present. These are the most ecologically valuable features and are likely to be species-rich Devon hedgebanks characteristic of National Character Area 147, the Blackdowns. Baseline value and connectivity

UKHab classification (the UK Habitat Classification field-survey standard) of the existing parcels must be completed before the biodiversity baseline is confirmed. The field interior holds limited intrinsic value on current evidence. The boundary hedgerows, by contrast, provide connectivity, foraging resource and commuting corridors for bats, plus nesting habitat for birds. These boundary features should drive the layout, not be retrofitted to a fixed design. This reflects the mitigation-hierarchy duty in NPPF December 2024 (a). Irreplaceable habitat screening

No priority habitat is recorded within the site, and no ancient woodland lies inside the boundary. Two ancient woodland parcels are recorded within 2km under the revised inventory. Neither is adjacent, so no direct loss or root-protection-area conflict arises on desktop evidence. The NPPF December 2024 (c) protection for irreplaceable habitats is therefore not engaged on-site, subject to verification. Recommended next step

Retention and reinforcement of the boundary hedgerow network is the key ecological design objective. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared to CIEEM guidelines, incorporating a UKHab survey, is required to confirm this baseline. We recommend it is commissioned before submission. Habitat distinctiveness and condition ratings stated here are desktop-derived and remain subject to field verification.

Baseline Habitat Survey

A Phase 1 habitat survey or UKHab survey should be carried out to confirm the baseline habitat types and areas. The desk-based assessment provides an initial classification but should be verified by field survey before the Biodiversity Metric calculation is finalised.

8 Designated Sites

Several statutory designated sites fall within the relevant search radius and zone of influence (Zoi — the distance over which a site's effects must be assessed). On current desktop evidence data pending presents a fatal Tier-1 constraint. Each nonetheless requires individual treatment at Tier 2, because the East Devon residential Zoi extends to 13.9 km for European sites. The figures below are drawn from the project designated-sites dataset and used as published. European sites within the zone of influence

Five European sites must each be carried forward to Habitats Regulations screening under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017:

- Sidmouth to West Bay SAC — 2,697m south. Qualifying features include coastal cliff and slope habitats. Credible pathways: recreation pressure and atmospheric pollution from traffic.
- East Devon Heaths SPA. 5,234m. Qualifying features: breeding Dartford warbler and nightjar assemblage. Pathway: recreational disturbance from net-new dwellings.
- East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SAC. Qualifying features: European dry heaths and wet heath. Pathway: recreation and nitrogen deposition.
- Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC. 7,903m. Qualifying features: reefs and sea caves. Pathway: limited; water quality only.
- Beer Quarry & Caves SAC. 8,466m. Qualifying feature: greater and lesser horseshoe bat roosts. Pathway: potential severance of foraging and commuting routes. SSSIs and the Impact Risk Zone

Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest require individual assessment. Sidmouth to Beer Coast SSSI lies 2,697m south. Ladram Bay to Sidmouth SSSI sits 4,619m to the south. The application area also falls within one Natural England Impact Risk Zone, covering 1,417.72ha, whose triggers include residential development. Natural England consultation is therefore likely. The IRZ category should be confirmed against the proposed use at pre-application stage. NPPF December 2024 (b) provides that development likely to adversely affect an SSSI should not normally be permitted, so the screening position must be evidenced rather than assumed. The Supreme Court in *R (on the application of Champion) v North Norfolk District Council* [2015] UKSC 52 confirmed that, where material doubt remains, that doubt must be resolved in favour of requiring appropriate assessment. We adopt that precautionary approach here. The next step is a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report, prepared by the applicant for the competent authority, supported by the nutrient budget. Conclusion

The designated receptors considered, five European sites, two coastal SSSIs and the Impact Risk Zone, are addressed on available desktop evidence. data pending is a Tier-1 show-stopper, but each carries forward as a live Tier-2 matter on current desktop evidence.

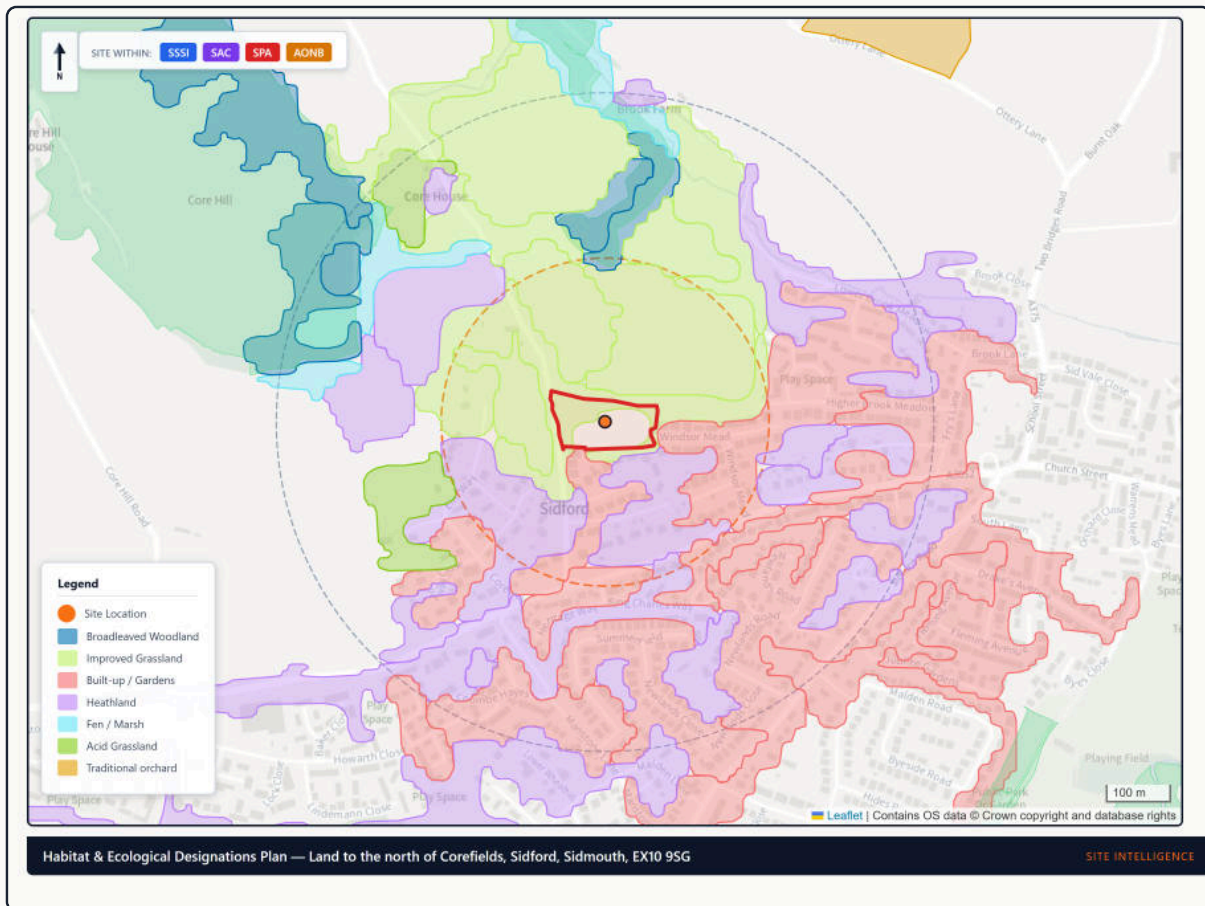
Designation	Count	Status
SSSI	6	PRESENT
SAC	11	PRESENT
SPA	7	PRESENT
Ramsar	0	NONE

European designated sites (SAC/SPA) are present within the search area. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening may be required to assess potential adverse effects on the integrity of these sites.



Site Location

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Habitat & Designated Sites Plan
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Designated Sites — closest 8 within search radius

Distance values are taken from the per-site distanceMetres field in the Natural England designated-sites enrichment. Distances are nearest-edge to nearest-edge of the planning red line.

Site	Designation	Distance
FIRE BEACON HILL	LNR	1,267 m
Filcombe Copse	AncientWoodlandRevised	1,527 m
	AncientWoodlandRevised	1,684 m
Sidmouth to Beer Coast SSSI	SSSI	2,697 m
Sidmouth to West Bay	SAC	2,697 m
Ladram Bay to Sidmouth SSSI	SSSI	4,619 m
East Devon Heaths	SPA	5,234 m
East Devon Pebblebed Heaths	SAC	5,234 m

9 Landscape Character

National Character Area	147: Blackdowns
Landscape Character	

The landscape character context informs the habitat creation and enhancement strategy to ensure that BNG delivery is appropriate to the local ecological context and contributes to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

10 BNG Applicability Assessment

Mandatory biodiversity net gain applies to this scheme.

Criterion	Assessment	Result
Development type	Full planning application	APPLIES
Self-build exemption	Not self-build	APPLIES
De minimis threshold	1.08 ha	ASSESS
Habitat impact	Requires Phase 1 Habitat Survey	SURVEY NEEDED

The proposed development is subject to the mandatory 10% BNG requirement under the Environment Act 2021. A Biodiversity Gain Plan will be required as a condition of any planning permission granted.

11 Exemption Assessment

The Biodiversity Gain Site Register and Biodiversity Gain Site Regulations (SI 2024/47, in force February 2024) set out the statutory exemptions from the mandatory 10% BNG requirement. The following assessment considers each statutory category against this development.

Statutory category (SI 2024/47 reg 4)	Status	Reasoning
Development granted by a development order under section 59 (permitted development rights)	DOES NOT APPLY	The proposal is an outline planning application requiring express consent from East Devon District Council; it is not development authorised by a development order under section 59 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Statutory category (SI 2024/47 reg 4)	Status	Reasoning
De minimis — no impact on priority habitat and development area below 25 sq m (or 5 m linear) threshold (SI 2024/47 reg. 4)	DOES NOT APPLY	The application site is 1.08 ha (10,800 sq m), far exceeding the 25 sq m threshold in SI 2024/47 reg. 4; the de minimis exemption is not engaged regardless of priority habitat status.
Self-build or custom housebuilding (≤9 dwellings, ≤0.5 ha, exclusively self-build or custom housebuilding per s.1(A1) Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015)	DOES NOT APPLY	The proposal is for up to 15 market and affordable dwellings promoted by a land promoter; it exceeds the 9-dwelling and 0.5 ha thresholds and is not exclusively self-build or custom housebuilding.
Urgent Crown development under s.293A Town and Country Planning Act 1990	DOES NOT APPLY	The application is a private residential land promotion; it is not Crown development and no urgency direction under s.293A has been sought or granted.
Development of a biodiversity gain site	DOES NOT APPLY	The site is an agricultural field with no registered biodiversity gain site status; it is not being developed in its capacity as a habitat enhancement or offset delivery site.
HS2-related development (s.1(2) High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013)	DOES NOT APPLY	The site is in Sidford, Devon, and has no connection to the HS2 programme; this exemption is not engaged.
Small sites exemption (site area ≤0.2 ha — check current regulatory status)	DOES NOT APPLY	Even if a small-sites exemption were in force at the date of submission, the application site at 1.08 ha exceeds the 0.2 ha threshold by a factor of five; the exemption would not be engaged.

BNG Applies

No statutory exemption applies on the desktop evidence. This development is subject to mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain under Schedule 7A T&CPA 1990 (inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Confirm with the applicant team before submission.

12 UKHab Classification (Indicative)

Refer to the Baseline Habitat Assessment section for the narrative discussion of the on-site habitat composition. The table below summarises the desktop-classification inputs that feed the indicative biodiversity-unit baseline. All values are **indicative only**; the UKHab Phase 1 survey will confirm or replace each row.

UKHab classification (desktop)	Modified grassland
UKHab code	G4
Distinctiveness band	2
Condition band (assumed)	Poor
Strategic significance	Low
Indicative baseline units	2.16 units
10% net gain target	0.22 units

UKHab Survey Required

A UKHab Phase 1 habitat survey carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist (CIEEM-MCIEEM or equivalent) must confirm the rows above before any of these values are used in a statutory metric calculation or Biodiversity Gain Plan submission.

13 10% Net Gain Target (Components)

Refer to the BNG Applicability Assessment section for the narrative reasoning on whether BNG applies. This section sets out the statutory components of the 10% target and discloses which Statutory Biodiversity Metric multipliers ARE and ARE NOT included in the desktop figure.

Component	Requirement
Minimum Net Gain	10% uplift in biodiversity units (Sch 7A para 2(3))
Measurement Tool	the statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, current version)
Habitat Duration	Secured for minimum 30 years (Sch 7A para 9(3))
Delivery Preference	On-site > Off-site > Statutory Credits
Habitat Management	Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) required
Legal Mechanism	Conservation covenant or s106 agreement

Statutory Metric multipliers – what is in the desktop figure

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, current version) calculates biodiversity units as the product of **seven** multipliers. The desktop baseline figure shown in the UKHab Classification section applies the first four; the remaining three are compliance-stage multipliers applied during the statutory metric calculation by a CIEEM-qualified ecologist.

Included in desktop figure:

- Area (or hedgerow length / watercourse length)
- Distinctiveness (UKHab band)
- Condition (Poor / Fairly Poor / Moderate / Good)
- Strategic Significance (LNRS overlay; Low default × 1.0)

NOT included — applied at compliance stage:

- Temporal multiplier (time-to-target reduction for created habitat)
- Difficulty multiplier (habitat-creation difficulty discount)
- Spatial Risk multiplier (off-site / cross-LPA penalty, max 2:1 for statutory credits)

14 Biodiversity Gain Plan Requirements

The mitigation hierarchy in NPPF December 2024 (a) should drive the design: avoid harm first, then mitigate, and only compensate as a last resort. The boundary hedgerows and trees are the primary ecological assets. They should be retained and buffered within the layout, with built development directed to the lower-value field interior. Recommended mitigation measures

The following measures are recommended for the Tier-2 design and should be secured by condition or legal agreement:

- Retain and reinforce the boundary Devon hedgebanks; establish a hedge protection buffer during construction, with tree protection to BS 5837:2012. - A sensitive external lighting scheme to protect bat commuting routes, designed to BCT Guidance Note GN08/23. - Vegetation clearance outside the bird nesting season (March to August), or under ecologist supervision with nesting checks. - Reptile-sensitive working methods and, if surveys confirm slow-worm presence, a translocation strategy with a prepared receptor area. - A Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity) to control pollution pathways and protect the local aquifer noted in earlier planning history. - A nutrient-neutrality mitigation package sufficient to offset the phosphate budget within the River Axe catchment. Enhancement opportunities

Beyond mitigation, the scheme can deliver genuine biodiversity enhancement: species-rich wildflower grassland, new native hedgerow and standard trees, and wildlife-friendly sustainable drainage. Separate from statutory net-gain delivery, the wider biodiversity strategy may incorporate integrated habitat enhancement features within buildings and structures. These enhancements respond to NPPF (December 2024), which calls for features supporting priority species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs, and to local policies EN5, EN4 and EN3, alongside design policies D1, D2 and D3 covering landscape and trees. Appeal calibration

East Devon inspectors have accepted that well-targeted mitigation can overcome biodiversity concerns. In one allowed minor-dwellings appeal (APP/U1105/W/22/3296021), the inspector found that mitigation provision overcame the principal biodiversity concern and even secured limited net benefits. A comparable, condition-secured package is achievable here. A site visit and a Phase 1 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are recommended to confirm these recommendations before submission.

Element	Description
Baseline Value	Pre-development biodiversity value calculated using the Metric
Post-Development Value	Predicted biodiversity value after habitat creation/enhancement
Net Gain Calculation	Demonstration that minimum 10% net gain is achieved
On-Site Habitats	Details of habitat creation and enhancement on site
Off-Site Habitats	If required — details of off-site habitat delivery or credit purchase
HMMP	Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan for 30 years
Legal Mechanism	How habitats will be legally secured (covenant/s106)

15 BNG Risk Rating and Estimated Costs

BNG Risk Rating	AMBER
Risk Assessment	Standard BNG pathway — applies, on-site delivery achievable subject to UKHab survey.
Applicable Metric	Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, current version)

Cost scenarios

The figures below are scenario-based. They cover on-site habitat works AND a 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) where applicable. Actual costs depend on UKHab survey results, final layout, and live off-site unit market rates at procurement.

Scenario	Capex	30-yr monitoring	Total	Risk
On-site only	£8,000–£18,000	£6,000–£12,000	£14,000–£30,000	Low — on-site gain target of +0.22 area units is modest relative to site area; achievable through wildflower grassland creation and hedgerow management within the illustrative landscape strategy. Risk increases if field survey reveals a higher

Scenario	Capex	30-yr monitoring	Total	Risk
				baseline (species-rich hedgerows) requiring greater gain delivery.
On-site + off-site (brokered)	£8,000–£18,000 (on-site) + £6,000–£15,000 (off-site unit purchase, indicative)	£3,000–£6,000 (on-site element only; off-site monitoring carried by habitat bank)	£17,000–£39,000	Low-Medium — off-site unit price is market-dependent and subject to Devon LNRS multiplier once adopted. Brokered route adds procurement time (typically 4–8 weeks). Recommended only if field survey confirms on-site delivery is insufficient.
On-site + statutory credits	£8,000–£18,000 (on-site) + statutory credit purchase at current Defra prices (last reviewed 19 June 2025) with 2:1 spatial risk multiplier applied	£3,000–£6,000 (on-site element; statutory credits carry no ongoing monitoring liability for the applicant)	£11,000–£24,000 + statutory credit cost (see note)	High — statutory credits are a last-resort route and carry a 2:1 SRM, making them disproportionately expensive for a small gain target. Natural England must confirm credit availability. This route should only be pursued if on-site and off-site delivery are both demonstrably unachievable. Statutory credit prices are set by Defra and subject to change; confirm current prices with Natural England at the time of application.

Gain-unit purchase reference (lower bound): £5,400 — £10,800. This figure is the indicative cost of buying off-site biodiversity units to cover the 10% gain target ALONE. It does NOT include on-site works, HMMP preparation, ecologist fees, or 30-year monitoring — see scenarios above for total cost ranges. Per Site Intelligence house deterministic methodology; not a market quotation.

16 Recommendations

- Commission a UKHab Phase 1 habitat survey to confirm baseline habitat types and condition
- Complete the statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation to quantify baseline and post-development biodiversity units
- Prepare a Biodiversity Gain Plan for submission as a condition discharge
- Develop a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for 30 years
- Consider the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) when designing habitat creation
- Assess potential impacts on designated sites — HRA screening may be required

BNG Screening Outcome

The proposed development is subject to the mandatory 10% BNG requirement. A UKHab survey and Biodiversity Metric calculation should be commissioned to quantify the baseline and post-development biodiversity value. Designated ecological sites are present within the search area and additional assessment may be required to demonstrate no adverse effects.

Planning Submission Use

This report may be used to inform pre-application discussions and early design decisions. It must NOT be submitted as a substitute for a UKHab survey, statutory metric calculation, Biodiversity Gain Plan, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report, or protected-species survey where any of these are required by the LPA or statutory consultees.

Applicant design instruction

Retain boundary hedgerows and mature trees wherever the layout permits; maintain a minimum 5 m buffer from hedgerow / tree root protection areas where practicable; avoid lighting spill onto retained habitat (use warm-white sources at $\leq 2,700$ K, motion-activated, downward-directed); reserve sufficient open space and SuDS area for species-rich grassland / meadow creation to support BNG delivery. Swift bricks, bat boxes and bird boxes should be specified as ecological enhancements but NOT relied upon as the primary BNG delivery mechanism.

16.1 Client Action Plan

Recommended sequence of actions to convert this Tier 1 desktop position into a submission-ready Biodiversity Gain Plan.

Priority	Action	Who	Timing	Why
1	Commission UKHab Phase 1 / PEA	Ecologist (CIEEM-MCIEEM)	Before layout freeze	Confirm baseline + protected-species risk; replace desktop assumptions
2	Confirm hedgerow + tree retention strategy	Architect / ecologist / arboriculturist	Concept design	Avoid avoidable BNG loss + protected-species licensing
3	Run statutory metric calculation	Ecologist	Pre-submission	Confirm 10% gain achievable on the proposed layout
4	Prepare BNG strategy + supporting statement	Planning + ecology team	Application stage	Demonstrate that gain objective is achievable per Sch 7A para 14(2)
5	BGP + 30-year HMMP	Ecologist + planning team	Post-permission, pre-commencement	Discharge the pre-commencement BGP condition (Sch 7A para 13)

16.2 Baseline Sensitivity (Indicative)

The desktop baseline is sensitive to the assumed condition band and distinctiveness band. The matrix below shows how the indicative baseline figure shifts under alternative classification assumptions — the UKHab survey must confirm which combination applies before any metric submission.

Scenario (distinctiveness / condition)	Baseline units (indicative)	10% gain target
Low / Poor	2.16 units	0.22 units
Low / Fairly Poor	3.24 units	0.32 units
Low / Moderate	4.32 units	0.43 units
Medium / Poor	4.32 units	0.43 units
Medium / Fairly Poor	6.48 units	0.65 units
Medium / Moderate	8.64 units	0.86 units

Sensitivity matrix uses the area × distinctiveness-band × condition-band formula. Strategic Significance held at Low (×1.0). Temporal, Difficulty, and Spatial Risk multipliers NOT applied — they are compliance-stage adjustments. Site area: 1.08 ha. Current desktop baseline: 2.16 units.

17 Conclusion

This BNG Screening Statement has assessed the biodiversity implications of the proposed development at Land to the north of Corefields, Sidford, Sidmouth, EX10 9SG. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the Environment Act 2021, the Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations 2024, and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, current version).

The development is subject to the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain requirement. A Biodiversity Gain Plan will be required and must be approved by the LPA before commencement of development (Schedule 7A paragraph 13). The recommendations above should be implemented to demonstrate that the gain objective is achievable at application stage, in accordance with Schedule 7A paragraph 14(2).

18 General Desktop Limitations

18.1 What This Report Does NOT Assess

This is a desktop intelligence report forming part of the Site Intelligence advisory pack. It does not include intrusive investigation, measured survey, statutory consultation, or formal consultant sign-off unless expressly commissioned. The following are outside the scope of this assessment:

- Site walkover or boundary inspection
- UKHab Phase 1 / Phase 2 habitat survey
- Habitat-condition assessment by a CIEEM-qualified ecologist
- Protected-species surveys (bat / reptile / breeding bird / amphibian)
- Arboricultural impact assessment to BS 5837:2012
- Submission-grade Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening or Appropriate Assessment
- Legal review of off-site biodiversity-unit delivery mechanisms (s.106 / conservation covenants)
- Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) preparation
- Field verification of indicative baseline biodiversity-unit calculations

18.2 Data Gaps

The following data was not available at the time of this assessment:

- On-site UKHab classification — desktop inferred from aerial imagery only
- Habitat condition band — assumed pending field survey
- Protected-species presence — desktop NBN Atlas search only
- Hedgerow length, species composition, condition — not measured
- Tree-survey BS 5837 categorisation — not undertaken
- Statutory metric Strategic Significance multiplier — desktop default Low ($\times 1.0$) applied

18.3 Key Assumptions

This report has been prepared on the basis of the following assumptions:

- Information provided by the client is accurate and complete
- Public ecology datasets (Natural England MAGIC / NBN / EA) are current at the date of this report
- Site area as recorded in project-details represents the planning red line
- No statutory exemption under SI 2024/47 reg 4 has been identified on the available evidence
- Strategic Significance is treated as Low pending LNRS overlay confirmation

18.4 Specialist Investigation Required

The following specialist investigations may be required depending on the constraints identified in this report:

- UKHab Phase 1 habitat survey by CIEEM-MCIEEM ecologist
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation (compliance grade)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment screening (where SAC / SPA / Ramsar within Zone of Influence)
- Protected-species surveys identified by the Phase 1 walkover
- Arboricultural impact assessment where retained trees are affected
- Off-site biodiversity-unit broker / Responsible Body engagement (where on-site delivery is insufficient)

18.5 Changes That Would Require Update

This report should be reviewed and updated if any of the following occur:

- Defra publishes updated Statutory Biodiversity Metric (currently 4.0)
- Phase 1 habitat survey data older than 2 years
- Protected species survey data older than 1 breeding season
- Site layout changes affecting baseline habitat areas
- Natural England updates standing advice on protected species
- New ecological designations within influence zone (SSSI, SAC, SPA)

- Small site exemption (0.2 ha) consultation concludes and regulations enacted
- Brownfield BNG exemption consultation concludes and regulations enacted

19 Data Assurance Summary

Site Intelligence applies a rigorous data assurance process to every report. This section documents the breadth of data coverage, confidence levels, and quality assurance stages applied.

19.1 Internal Data Coverage Summary

Metric	This Report	Typical Stage 1 Desktop Scope
Data sources consulted	15	3 – 8
Constraint categories checked	38	5 – 10
Data sources queried	15	0 – 2
Provenance entries recorded	15	0

Indicative comparison only. Reflects typical early-stage desktop scope rather than a formal industry benchmark; a wider technical due diligence instruction may consult more datasets at any tier.

19.2 Quality Assurance Checklist

- Automated constraint detection (38-flag desktop constraint analysis, deduped to 36 + Flood Zone)
- Source provenance recording (every data point traced to origin)
- Cross-report consistency check (automated financial figure stamping and constraint reconciliation)
- Domain cross-check against the relevant chapter of the National Planning Policy Framework, planning-practice guidance and the chartered-practitioner methodology applicable to this technical area; map review performed against the OS basemap
- Chartered-practitioner sign-off (CIEEM as applicable); Tier 2 add-on, not undertaken for this desktop product

20 Anticipated Consultee Queries

Standard statutory consultees will be notified in accordance with the Development Management Procedure Order. Site-specific consultee requirements are identified in the relevant technical reports.

21 Update Triggers

Validity Period: 6 months from date of issue (ecological surveys may have shorter validity).

Desktop BNG Risk Screen is valid for 6 months from date of issue (ecological surveys may have shorter validity). After this period, or if any of the following trigger conditions occur, the report should be reviewed and updated before reliance is placed upon its findings.

- Defra publishes updated Statutory Biodiversity Metric (currently 4.0)
- Phase 1 habitat survey data older than 2 years
- Protected species survey data older than 1 breeding season
- Site layout changes affecting baseline habitat areas
- Natural England updates standing advice on protected species
- New ecological designations within influence zone (SSSI, SAC, SPA)
- Small site exemption (0.2 ha) consultation concludes and regulations enacted
- Brownfield BNG exemption consultation concludes and regulations enacted

To request an update, contact Site Intelligence quoting the document reference shown on the cover page. Updates are provided at a reduced fee where the original data remains substantially current.

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1. Named Client and Reliance Restriction

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The findings in this report are based on information provided by the Client, publicly available data sources, and desktop research. Site Intelligence has not independently verified the accuracy or completeness of information provided by the Client or third parties.

5. Limitations of Investigation

The scope of this report is limited to a Stage 1 desktop bng-screening undertaken on the date of this report. The findings reflect conditions and information available at the date of investigation. Conditions may change over time, and the report should not be relied upon beyond the validity period stated.

6. Professional Advice Caveat

This report provides professional opinion based on the information available at the time of preparation. It does not constitute legal advice, and specialist professional advice should be sought for specific matters including but not limited to structural engineering, surveying, ecology, archaeology, and contaminated land investigation.

7. No Guarantee of Outcome

Site Intelligence provides no guarantee as to the outcome of any planning application, building control submission, or statutory process. Planning and regulatory decisions are made by the relevant authorities at their sole discretion.

8. Data Completeness Caveat

While every effort has been made to identify relevant constraints and information, the absence of a recorded constraint does not guarantee that no constraint exists. Public data sources may contain gaps, errors, or omissions. The absence of a record does not guarantee the absence of a constraint.

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Where this report is submitted to a statutory authority (planning authority, building control, Environment Agency, etc.), the authority will exercise its own professional judgement in assessing the application. Submission of this report does not confer any right of reliance upon the authority, and Site Intelligence accepts no liability for decisions made by statutory authorities.

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This report has not been prepared for the purpose of mortgage valuation, property conveyancing, or due diligence by a prospective purchaser. Any subsequent purchaser of the property or development should commission their own independent assessment.

13. Report Validity Period

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This report and any dispute arising from it shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales. The courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction.

15. Not Financial / QS / Valuation Advice

Any cost estimates, development appraisals, or financial information contained in this report are preliminary and indicative only. They do not constitute quantity surveying advice, professional valuation, or financial advice. All cost estimates should be verified by a qualified quantity surveyor or cost consultant before being relied upon for investment or procurement decisions.

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Product-Specific Note

This Desktop BNG Risk Screen is a desktop assessment. It does not include site-specific survey, intrusive investigation, or specialist field work. The findings are based on publicly available data and should be read in conjunction with the Known Limitations section of this report.

Data Sources & Verification

The table below identifies the principal datasets used or flagged for verification. Where a source carries a verification URL it can be checked independently; where a source is marked “contact provider for verification” or “awaiting retrieval”, reliance should not be placed on that item until its status is updated to retrieved/verified. Data retrieval dates are recorded for audit purposes.

Wider platform datasets queried (audit log)

The table below lists every enrichment dataset queried by Site Intelligence’s platform during the production of this client pack. Not every dataset is materially relied upon by this specific report — see the Data Source Relevance section above for the flood-specific split. The full audit log is kept for completeness and source-provenance traceability.

Source / verification URL	Authority	Scope	Vintage / refresh	Retrieved
EA Flood Map for Planning https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk	Environment Agency	Flood zones, surface water risk, historic floods	2024 Q4 / Quarterly	2026-04-11
National Heritage List for England https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list	Historic England	Listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks	Continuously updated / Continuous	2026-04-11
MAGIC Interactive Map https://magic.defra.gov.uk	Natural England / DEFRA	SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites, NNRS	Continuously updated / Continuous	2026-04-11
Multi-source constraint detection https://magic.defra.gov.uk	Various (38 datasets, deduped to 36 + Flood Zone)	Green Belt, AONB, conservation areas, TPOs, flood zones	Mixed (see per-dataset) / Mixed	—
Census 2021 https://www.ons.gov.uk/census	Office for National Statistics	Population, demographics, housing tenure, travel patterns	2021 / Every 10 years	2026-04-11
PTAL Calculation (TfL TN14) https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/public-transport-accessibility-levels	Site Intelligence™ (TfL methodology)	Public transport accessibility index and grade	TN14 methodology (2015+) / Per retrieval (timetable-live)	2026-04-11
OpenStreetMap / Overpass https://www.openstreetmap.org	OpenStreetMap Contributors	Amenity proximity: schools, GPs, shops, transport stops	Continuously updated / Continuous	2026-04-11
BGS Geology of Britain https://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html	British Geological Survey	Bedrock, superficial deposits, made ground	Periodically updated / Annual+	2026-04-11
HM Land Registry Price Paid Data	HM Land Registry	Comparable property sale prices and transactions	Continuously updated / Monthly	2026-04-11

Source / verification URL	Authority	Scope	Vintage / refresh	Retrieved
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/price-paid-data-downloads				
ONS Housing Affordability https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing	Office for National Statistics	Affordability ratios, private rents, house prices	Latest annual release / Annual	2026-04-11
Agricultural Land Classification https://magic.defra.gov.uk	Natural England	Provisional ALC grade, best & most versatile status	Provisional (1960s-80s baseline) / Very infrequent	2026-04-11
National Character Area Profiles https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making	Natural England	Landscape character assessment and key characteristics	2013 (NCA profile set) / Very infrequent	2026-04-11
DfT Road Traffic Statistics https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk	Department for Transport	Annual average daily traffic counts	Annual (latest available) / Annual	2026-04-11
STATS19 Road Accident Data https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/cb7ae6f0-4be6-4935-9277-47e5ce24a11f/road-safety-data	Department for Transport	Road traffic collisions and casualties	Annual (latest available) / Annual	2026-04-11
DEFRA Background Air Quality https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/laqm-background-maps	DEFRA	Background NO2, PM10, PM2.5 concentrations	Annual map set (latest modelled year) / Annual	2026-04-11
DEFRA AQMA Boundaries https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/maps	DEFRA	Air Quality Management Area designations	Continuously updated / Continuous	2026-04-11
EA LIDAR Data https://environment.data.gov.uk/DefraDataDownload/?Mode=survey	Environment Agency	Terrain elevation, DSM/DTM coverage	LIDAR Composite (latest available tile) / Per acquisition programme	2026-04-11
DNO Long Term Development Statement Contact provider for verification	Distribution Network Operator	Electrical grid capacity and connection assessment	Latest LTDS (per DNO) / Annual	2026-04-11
LPA Planning Portal Contact provider for verification	Local Planning Authority	Nearby planning application history and decisions	Continuously updated / Continuous	2026-04-11

Vintage = publication date of the underlying dataset. Refresh = upstream update cadence. Retrieved = when Site Intelligence fetched the record used in this report.

Policy & Legislative Sources

Document	Published By	Edition	URL
National Planning Policy Framework	DLUHC	December 2024	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
Planning Practice Guidance	DLUHC	Online (continuously updated)	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	UK Parliament	As amended	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents

Local Plan: **East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 (Adopted)** (East Devon District Council). Neighbourhood Plan: Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan (Made November 2019).

AI-Assisted Analysis — Reference Statement

This report was prepared using AI-assisted data collation and analysis under internal quality-control procedures, in line with emerging professional-body guidance on the responsible use of AI in surveying and planning practice. All data sources are listed above with retrieval dates and verification URLs. A named professional remains responsible for reviewing and approving the contents of this report before issue. The analytical methodology and due diligence records are available on request.

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PREPARED FOR **Sample Client**

PREPARED BY

Site Intelligence

PF & Co Holdings Ltd

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FOR AND ON BEHALF OF

Site Intelligence™

PF & Co Holdings Ltd

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